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SUBJECT: MFA UNCERTAIN ON TRANSNISTRIA CONFERENCE,
DISCUSSES OTHER CIS ISSUES

REF: A. STATE 125824

[1](#)B. PARIS 4916

Classified By: A/DCM JOSIAH ROSENBLATT, FOR REASONS 1.4 B/D

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a meeting July 18 with POL M/C and Poloff, Jean-Francois Terral, the MFA's A/S-equivalent for the Balkans, Russia and the former Soviet space, said France was studying our ref A demarche supporting a multilateral conference on the Transnistria conflict, but was uncertain of its utility if it bypassed the Russians, especially given a GOF perception that Russia was beginning to come around to embracing a more positive role on the Transnistria conflict. Terral said he did not expect any backpedaling on EU/French commitments to the Balkans following French rejection of the EU Constitution, although he speculated that the EU (and France) would be "more rigorous" on conditions for membership. He said France would wait until the visit of OSCE SYG Brichambaut to Uzbekistan before making any decision on its policy regarding that country, and noted that the EU was beginning to focus more attention on Belarus, with new initiatives coming from Lithuania and Poland. End summary.

FRENCH SEE POSITIVE RUSSIAN MOVEMENT ON TRANSNISTRIA

[1](#)2. (C) Terral recounted that French/Russian discussions of the Transnistria problem had always featured a "ten-minute lecture" by the Russian interlocutor bemoaning the failure of the Kozak plan. Recently though, said Terral, the Russians had not given such lectures and had appeared to be open to greater EU (and U.S.) involvement. Furthermore, Terral raised the possibility of a EU monitoring mission along the Moldova-Ukraine border, which he said France fully supported. This monitoring mission, said Terral, would help dry up resources for the Transnistrian regime and help the Ukrainian government exert full authority over its border police. Given apparent Russian willingness to consider EU and US involvement and EU resolve to launch a monitoring mission along the border, Terral said a multilateral conference on Transnistria without Russia would run the risk of a Russian backlash. France would be open to such a conference, said Terral, if it occurred within the context of full Russian involvement. Terral reiterated the GOF's belief that Russia appeared to be evolving in the right direction regarding Transnistria and that now was not the time to ruffle Russian feathers.

EU WILL BE "MORE RIGOROUS" WITH THE BALKANS

[1](#)3. (C) POL M/C asked Terral if he anticipated any changes in French policy on the Balkans' future membership in the EU following French rejection of the EU Constitution. Terral said the defeat of the Constitution was still too recent to make any real guesses, but he believed that cooler heads would prevail, and France would continue to support the eventual integration of the Balkan countries into the EU. However, said Terral, he anticipated that the EU would be "more rigorous" in applying membership standards. He was as certain as he could be that Croatia would join the EU, whether or not on the precise schedule currently set out. If Croatia joins, it would be unnatural for Serbia to be left out. That left Bosnia, whose political and reform situation was "relatively stagnant," said Terral. He remained skeptical that Karadzic would be caught and believed that there was more political will in the region to catch Mladic.

UZBEKISTAN AND BELARUS: THE GOF WORRIES ABOUT A
LUKASHENKO-ORDERED "ANDIJON"

[1](#)4. (C) Terral said France continued to watch closely the situation in Uzbekistan, and looked forward to OSCE SYG Brichambaut's end of July visit. When asked what role the GOF saw for the OSCE, the EU and the UN, Terral appeared to backtrack from ref B report that France was opposed to raising the matter at the UN. Terral said that France was open to whatever method would work best, and was not against a role for the UN. Still, he said France preferred to "wait and see" how Karimov would react to Brichambaut's planned visit. In the context of the regional instability brought about by the events in Andijon in May, Terral said that EU members had renewed discussion on Belarus, given the possibility that Belarus President Lukashenko would not hesitate to use force just as Uzbekistan President Karimov had done. Recent discussions had involved a number of different EU members, said Terral, but for the most part had

featured Poland, Lithuania, France and Germany. Terral said Lithuania and Poland were particularly concerned about Belarus, and had suggested two new proposals: 1) outreach to possibly receptive members of Belarus officialdom/nomenklatura with the message that Lukashenko would not be in power forever, and it was in their interest to cultivate ties with the West; and 2) ask the Russians to pressure Belarus given that a Lukashenko-ordered "Andijon" event in Belarus would only spur Belarus instability and harm Russian interests there. Terral said the GOF had been surprised by the Lithuanian and Polish suggestions, especially the second one, which entailed close cooperation with the Russians. Although these and other proposals were only in the discussion stage within the EU, Terral made it clear that the EU and France were refocusing attention on Belarus in the hope of forestalling an "Andijon"-type event that was much closer to EU borders than Uzbekistan.

STAPLETON